

# Gynaecological Rapid Access Clinic (RAC)

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## Information for your visit from Women's Health

### **What is the Gynaecological RAC? and, why have I been referred?**

The purpose of the Gynaecological RAC is to make sure that patients whose symptoms might be caused by a serious problem, which can occasionally be cancer, are seen as quickly as possible. This avoids the waiting associated with ordinary clinic referrals, so that those who do not need further treatment (about nine in every 10 cases referred) can be quickly reassured, and those who do need further treatment can have it organised without further delay.

Referrals are usually made by your GP but can sometimes come from the scan department if they see, for example, ovarian cysts or thickened womb linings during a routine scan.

### **What will happen in the clinic?**

When you arrive at the clinic you will be met by the receptionist who will ask you to take a seat in the waiting area. If an abdominal and/or pelvic scan is needed before your appointment, you will be directed to the scan department for this.

At the consultation your doctor will ask some questions about your symptoms and past medical history. They will ask for your consent to proceed with a pelvic examination (sometimes called an internal) to check your vulva, vagina, cervix, uterus, and ovaries. On rare occasions the bladder and rectum (back passage) may also be examined.

For most women this is a painless examination, although it may be a little uncomfortable. You will have a nurse with you at all times when you are examined. Please tell the doctor or nurse if you have a latex allergy.

Your doctor may ask you to have some tests while you are at the hospital or arrange these for another day.



## How long will I be in the clinic?

You may be in the clinic for one to two hours, as tests and examinations may take time to complete.

You are welcome to bring a friend or relative with you to your appointment.

## What tests/procedures might I have at the clinic?

- **Blood tests**

You may have a blood test to make sure you are not anaemic and to check your hormone levels. Special blood tests may also be carried out to help in diagnosing your condition.

- **Ultrasound**

An ultrasound is a scan that creates pictures of the organs inside your pelvis and abdomen using sound waves. Your doctor may arrange for you to have either a trans-vaginal or abdominal ultrasound scan. Sometimes your doctor may ask you to have both types of scan.

An abdominal ultrasound is similar to that done in pregnancy, with the scanner device being rubbed over your abdomen. Trans-vaginal ultrasound involves gently inserting a small probe covered with a protective sheath a short way into your vagina. Although this type of ultrasound may sound uncomfortable, many women find it more comfortable than having an abdominal ultrasound as it is not necessary to have a full bladder.

- **Endometrial biopsy**

Your doctor may need to take a sample (biopsy) from inside your womb using a thin flexible instrument called a pipelle. If a pipelle sample is not possible or appropriate, you may need to be listed for a hysteroscopy in order to see the inside of your womb and to take a sample for biopsy. A hysteroscopy may be done in the outpatient clinic or it may involve a general anaesthetic (you will be asleep for the procedure) as a day case or an overnight stay in hospital. For more information ask a member of staff for a copy of the Trust's **Hysteroscopy** leaflet or download a copy from [www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/gynaecology-patient-leaflets/](http://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/gynaecology-patient-leaflets/)

- **Colposcopy**

A colposcopy is an examination of your cervix (neck of the womb). Your doctor may sometimes also need to take a sample (biopsy) from your cervix. The biopsy is a small piece of tissue and does not usually need an anaesthetic, although local anaesthetic injection will be available if you need or ask for it.

- **CT (Computerised Tomography) scan**

Your doctor may arrange for you to have a CT scan, which takes x-ray pictures of cross-sections of the inside of the body. The scan takes longer than an x-ray but it is painless. This scan will be arranged by your doctor and carried out at a later date.

- **MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan**

This test is like a CT scan but uses magnetism rather than x-rays to produce pictures. This will be arranged by your doctor at a future date.

## Do I need to bring anything to my appointment?

Please bring to your appointment a list of any medication you are taking, a sanitary towel or pant liner (although we will supply them if you forget), and a book (in case the clinic is running late).

## What happens next?

This waiting period may be an anxious time and we will try to contact you (as agreed during your consultation) when your results are available. If further investigations or treatments are needed, we will write to you or make you an appointment in one of the clinics to explain/discuss with you what will be needed.

## What if I feel unwell at home?

If you feel unwell when you return home, please contact your GP or in an emergency go to your nearest Emergency Department.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of the **Rapid Access Clinics**.

- Rapid Access Clinic, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 78 31 07
- Rapid Access Clinic, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 23 45 85
- Rapid Access Clinic, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 61 62 93

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)